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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

A Chaplain of the Revolution.

CARLTON A. STAPLES.

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A CHAPLAIN OF THE REVOLUTION.

My story opens after the manner of Mr. G. P. R. James, with a solitary horseman making his way through the wilderness of Western Massachusetts and New Hampshire, to join the patriot army at the old fortress of Ticonderoga, in August, 1776. Rev. Enos Hitchcock, then a young man of thirty-one, was colleague pastor with Rev. Mr. Chipman of a Congregational church in Beverly, a native of Springfield, and a graduate of Harvard in the Class of 1767. Like most young men of that period, he was an ardent patriot, and threw himself into the contest with Great Britain with the enthusiasm of a generous nature. He had been appointed chaplain of Colonel Learned's regiment, and was subsequently promoted to the chaplaincy of General Patterson's brigade. In following his fortunes through the war of the Revolution and in the pastorate of the First Congregational Society in Providence, I shall make free use of his manuscript diaries, kept on interleaved almanacs, and preserved in the archives of the Rhode Island Historical Society. The brief entries from day to day on these stained and yellow leaves bring home to us the events of that great struggle more vividly than the formal pages of the historian. We catch glimpses, here and there, of the discipline of the army and of the trials and joys of the men, which are found only in the narratives of an eye-witness and active participant.

Mr. Hitchcock makes his way from settlement to settlement by roads that were mere cart-paths cut through the woods, spending the night with some brother minister or a lonely backwoodsman, and living on such fare as he picks

up by the way or as he carries in his knapsack, well filled at home. At Charlestown, N.H., he overtakes the regiment, and marches with it to the fort, in command of General Gates, reaching the end of the long journey on the night of the twelfth day. Here comfortable quarters were provided for him, and here nearly a year of his service was passed. The day after his arrival was Sunday, and he expected to hold religious services morning and afternoon; but, as the rain poured down in torrents through the day, they were omitted. However, the gloomy day did not interfere with a sumptuous dinner, where the viands were neither scant nor unsavory. The chaplain dined with Major Hays, Colonels Maxwell, Sinclair, Baldwin, and others, on these dishes: "Boiled tongue, ham, calf's pate, squash, green peas and beans, roast veal, goose, and pig, cucumbers, rice pudding, custard and cheese and wine and punch in plenty!" A pleasing picture this of the good things which awaited him after his long march in the wilderness, when "raw salt pork and salt fish" sometimes formed the chief bill of fare.

This first dinner at Ticonderoga was not altogether exceptional.

August 15. Dined with Generals Gates, Bricket, and others, on a very high hill in the woods over against the point [the hill afterwards known as Mount Defiance, which Burgoyne seized and thus compelled the evacuation of Ticonderoga. The American officers had pronounced it inaccessible to artillery, and left it unguarded. Mr. Hitchcock does not recite the bill of fare. Doubtless, it was abundant and toothsome.]

August 16. Dined at home on a good sirloin of roast beef, with green peas, and read "The Good and Bad Mother."—*17.* Went over the ground where the battle of 1758 was fought, and found several human bones, pieces of shells, and one ball. Dined at home on roast beef. A duel was fought to-day between two Southern officers. Read "The Shepherdess of the Alps," a moral tale.

August 18. This day, Sunday, arrived my chest with the tents. The regiment preparing to pitch them could not parade for service, and so I preached in the afternoon on Mount Independence for Mr. Spring to Colonels Stark's and Poor's regiments.—*19.* Walked to the mills and to the northern end of Lake George, where Lord Howe fell in 1758. Dined at home on pork, green peas, and roast beef, and spent the afternoon in reading "The Happy Divorce" and "Annelete and Lubin,"—moral tales.—*20.* Dined at home on stewed pork and green peas. Prayed

with the regiment for the first time.—*23.* Passed the day in reading "The Mystery of Abinia,"— Montague. Dined largely on fine roast pig and boiled head with Revs. Emerson [William Emerson, the grandfather of R. W. Emerson, who died a few weeks after this] and Mr. Spring.

June 5. Colonel Hale dined with us upon fish and venison steak. Officers turn out to exercise, agreeable to orders. Drank tea with Major Hall. Headache, no prayers.—*6th.* Happened to lie in bed this morning till almost eight o'clock. Slept very sound after a fine supper of venison steaks. This may seem strange, but it cured my headache. Dined on roast veal, stuft. (A soldier was set on the gallows for half an hour, and received one hundred lashes for enlisting twice and deserting.)

These tempting bills of fare show that the patriots of the Revolution at the opening of the war lived quite luxuriously.

The fortress of Ticonderoga, captured by Ethan Allen and his Green Mountain boys a few months before, was situated on the west shore of the lake, near the point where the waters of Lake George unite with those of Lake Champlain. It was supposed to command the passage between the lakes, and was regarded as the key to the Hudson and New York from the Canadian frontier. In the French and Indian War this was the grand objective point, and in its neighborhood the most desperate and bloody battles were fought. For miles around there may still be traced the graves of men who perished here, where France and England contended for the mastery of the American continent. Mount Independence, on the eastern shore, opposite Ticonderoga, was strongly fortified; and its green slopes are furrowed with soldiers' graves. Here were the hospitals of General Gates's army; and here Chaplain Hitchcock was a faithful attendant upon the sick and dying.

The troops had been hastily gathered from the farms and workshops of the country. Wholly unused to camp life, and ignorant of the ordinary means of guarding against sickness, they were soon attacked by diseases incident to army experience; and hundreds were laid at rest from war's alarms on the shores of the beautiful lake. Mr. Hitchcock was devoted to his duties in these scenes of suffering and

death. He usually offered prayer with the regiment at evening parade, and during the day visited the hospitals to cheer the sick, receive the last messages of the dying, and hold funeral services over the dead laid in graves which their kindred and friends would never behold. He often gives the names of the dead, the company or regiment to which they belonged, and sometimes the places from which they came. The mention of savory dinners is not so frequent after these scenes of suffering thicken around him; but he seems never unappreciative of creature comforts, and speaks of them with evident satisfaction. "A fine breast of roast venison," "a nice piece of roast wild-pig," "a fine venison dinner," "a stuffed leg of veal," "dined with General Gates after service," or "with Rev. Mr. Emerson of Concord," are expressions frequently met on these pages, intermingled with alarms of pickets and encounters of ships on the lake, the names of the dead, letters from home, work on new redoubts, and texts of Sunday sermons, of which there were generally two.

Thus passed the autumn and winter of 1776 at Ticonderoga. Little was attempted in offensive or defensive operations. A few skirmishes occurred with prowling bands of Indians, and a few slight encounters with the enemy on the lake. Some new works were commenced, and a bridge built from the eastern to the western shore, connecting the fort with Mount Independence. An easy, indolent security prevailed. The real key to Lake George and the headwaters of the Hudson was left unguarded; and in the summer of 1777, when Burgoyne advanced from Canada to take possession of the lakes and the valley of the Hudson, Ticonderoga fell without firing a gun. The British engineers scaled Mount Defiance in a single night, and planted their artillery on its summit, compelling the evacuation of all the American works. Thus a most important position was lost; and a hundred and thirty pieces of heavy artillery, with large stores of provisions, fell into the hands of the enemy. The way was now open for the British army to advance into New York and New England. General Gates's army

retreated in confusion and dismay; while the Indians hung upon the rear and flanks, snatching up every straggler and putting him to the tomahawk.

Chaplain Hitchcock briefly describes the scenes of distress and horror which attended the retreat. On arriving at Fort Ann on the 7th of July, a council was called, which decided to destroy the fort, and push on to Fort Edward, sixteen miles distant. Accordingly, they marched on in a heavy rain, the enemy pressing them close and hard through the day. At Fort Edward they had hoped to make a stand; but General Gates, distrusting his ability to offer any serious resistance to Burgoyne, continued his retreat to Saratoga, and finally to Stillwater on the Hudson. Mr. Hitchcock had now become chaplain of Patterson's brigade, retaining this position to the close of the war; and it gave him an inside view of the movements of the army. He was present at councils where plans of battles were discussed and an advance or retreat determined, and often met with Generals Gates, Schuyler, Nixon, St. Clair, Lincoln, Glover, and Arnold. He records many instances of Indian outrage on the line of march. Whole families were butchered in cold blood by the fiends in human form whom Burgoyne had attached to his army, but whom he could not control. The scout, straggler, or exposed picket was liable to be shot down and scalped at any moment. Consternation filled the country around. Not a morning passed without bringing its stories of people scalped at their own firesides or killed while fleeing from the invisible foe. We have often read the history of Burgoyne's campaign, and know something of the enormities of savage warfare attending it; but, looking through these brief notes of Chaplain Hitchcock's diary, and seeing the daily record of the men, women, and children put to death in the most barbarous manner, wherever the army moved, we feel that the histories have not told half the truth.

Who does not remember the piteous story of poor Jennie McCrea, related at every New England fireside? Here it is noted down, apparently, on the very day when the awful

tragedy occurred. She was a farmer's daughter, living in the vicinity of Fort Edward, where her grave is still to be seen. Her people had fled to Albany; but she lingered in the neighborhood, hoping to meet the young man — a neighbor's son — to whom she was betrothed. Being a Tory, he had joined the invading army in Canada, and was serving as an officer. Under date of July 26 the diary reads: "Four of the picket-guard were killed to-night, and scalped. The guard retreated, and were pursued within forty rods of the fort. Two women were seized in a house, killed, scalped, and the body of one mangled in a most inhuman manner." On the following day he adds: "The two women were Jennie McCrea and Widow Campbell. They were going to meet the enemy for protection, when the Indians came upon them and inhumanly butchered them." The scalp of Jennie was brought into the British camp, and recognized by her lover from the long silken tresses. The two women were preparing that morning to depart for Albany, when the Indians broke into the house for pillage. In the alarm, Jennie besought them to take her to the British camp for protection, promising them a great reward of fire-water. In the quarrel that ensued over the division of the coveted prize, both were put to death.

This story of Jennie McCrea, and a hundred others like it, roused a spirit in New England homes which Burgoyne's well-disciplined army could not overcome. Thousands flocked to the standard of Stark and Warner at Bennington, where they crushed General Baum. Burgoyne soon found himself hemmed in by the stout yeomanry on every side, and could neither advance nor retreat. His Indian allies deserted him, the elements seemed in league against him, and he was compelled to surrender to the men whom he affected to despise. Chaplain Hitchcock was present at many of the skirmishes and battles. He records the first overtures of Burgoyne for terms of capitulation, and describes the final surrender. He tells of the unbounded enthusiasm of the patriot army when they knew that their work was finished. Yet pity for a fallen foe checked all

exultation. When the British troops marched out and laid down their arms, no jeering, taunting, or boasting was heard.

After the surrender Mr. Hitchcock took a furlough, and came on to Boston with the captured army. In the spring of 1778 he rejoined his brigade at Valley Forge, just at the close of that dreadful winter of suffering and death. Here he records a general order of the commander-in-chief, directing "that divine service be performed every Sunday at eleven o'clock, in each brigade where there is a chaplain; and those which have not, will attend the place of worship nearest them. It is expected that officers of all ranks will, by their attendance, set an example to their men. While we are performing the duty of good citizens and soldiers, we ought not to be inattentive to the higher duties of religion. To the distinguished character of a patriot, it should be our highest glory to add the more distinguished character of a Christian." Then follows a second general order, announcing the alliance between the United States and France. The several brigades were ordered to assemble at 9 A.M., when their chaplains were to offer a thanksgiving, and deliver a discourse suitable to the occasion.

May 6. Agreeable to yesterday's orders, Learned's and our brigade assembled. I harangued them on the object of the contest, the many interesting interpositions of Providence, and especially that which we were now celebrating, as demanding our gratitude. The cannon fired at twelve o'clock for a *feu de joie*. Thirteen cannon were discharged: then a running fire began at the right in the front line, and ran to the left, and from the left to the right in the rear line. Then, at the fire of a cannon from the park, they huzzaed, "Long live the King of France!" and the artillery fired again; then another huzza, "Long live the friendly European powers!" another cannon, a huzza, "To the American States!" General Washington invited all the officers of the army to refresh themselves, for which purpose booths were built.

Thus the terrible winter at Valley Forge ends in rejoicing. Nothing is said now about "fine venison steaks," or "roast pig and green peas, with plenty of wine and punch." Washington had banished wine from his table from motives

of economy; and the diary says, "In five days we have drawn only one day's meat."

June 4. This morning at guard-mounting one Schanks was executed. He was taken as a spy day before yesterday. He had been an ensign in our service, and, being broke for theft, he ran to the enemy and was out as a spy. This day the whole army left the huts, their winter camp.

Now began the retreat of the British army from Philadelphia to New York through the Jerseys. Washington pressed the enemy hard and close, being determined to bring on a general engagement at the first favorable moment. Leaving behind all baggage, and at last dropping their knapsacks, by forced marches the Americans gained forty miles on the British, and encountered them at Monmouth on Sunday, the 28th of June. The weather was intensely hot, and the suffering of the men was fearful. It was a long and desperate fight. General Lee, commanding the second line of battle, was opposed to making the attack, and sought to prevent it. As soon as the first line, composed of militia, broke and fell back, he gave the order to retreat. Washington met him with his command in the utmost disorder and confusion. We may well believe that his words were more forcible than polite. "What does this mean, General Lee?" thundered Washington. Possibly he swore: he sometimes did, when the provocation was very great. His wrath, said one of the officers, was something awful. But he stopped the retreat. He reformed the lines and renewed the attack. Under his eye, the soldiers bore themselves like veterans, and the enemy was compelled to give way.

It was a glorious repulse [says the chaplain] of an army that never ran before. Our loss is uncertain, but I believe more died through the uncommon heat than in the action. Last night the army encamped on the field in open dirt. This morning I rode down to Monmouth Court House, and viewed the field of battle. The dead were thick strown near three miles. Many of the enemy, as well as ours, appear to have died of heat, the intenseness of which exceeded what I have ever felt for several days. It is thought that the British had six or seven thousand in the action. Morgan is now pushing them, and with his light troops harassing their rear. One circumstance which adds lustre to this victory is that in the excessive heat of summer, in a country badly watered, we

pursued and overtook them by a march forty miles longer than theirs. This day we remained on the ground, parched with heat. General orders given for the army to parade at seven in the evening, and offer up thanksgiving to God for the success of our arms. Colonel Ramsey, who was taken in the action, came out on parade. He says that Clinton commanded in person, and they were surprised to see with what courage and regularity our men fought, that they were not apprehensive of General Washington's army being so near, that they did not expect an action, and sought to avoid it.

July 1. General Lee arrested!

This was at the request of Lee himself, who demanded a court-martial on the charge of misbehavior in the presence of the enemy. He was deeply offended at Washington's language to him on the field of Monmouth, and never forgave it. Though acquitted by the court-martial, he soon retired from the army and never resumed service.

After the battle of Monmouth, Washington moved to the North, part of the army resting upon the Hudson in the vicinity of West Point, and part remaining in the Jerseys about Morristown, where they finally went into winter quarters. The discipline of the army became more and more stringent as the war went on, especially when the troops were under the eye of the commander-in-chief. He permitted no pilfering from the inhabitants of the country, and tolerated no outrage.

August 17. This morning, after guard-mounting, eleven men [whose names are given] were brought out for execution, for deserting and resisting an officer. One was shot, and the others respited until Friday.

Again we have these curious incidents:—

Last night some waggoners attempted to maraud a hog of an inhabitant,— he, defending himself, shot a soldier dead on the spot. This afternoon was executed at four o'clock David Hall of the Pennsylvania line for robbing an inhabitant. He with three others blacked themselves and entered the house in the night, bound the men and made the women show them where the most valuable articles were. But the neighbors rallied, pursued and caught this man, and upon conviction he was sentenced to suffer death. The adjutant-general sent to request me to attend him. I did. Found the poor unhappy man somewhat affected by his case, but he did not seem to be acquainted with religion. As the poor fellow was going to the place of execution, a number of women came to

bid him farewell; and one, seizing him with both her hands, said, "Great luck to you, David." The troops advanced near Paulus Hook [now Jersey City] were ordered to march by the soldier taken from the ranks and executed for marauding the inhabitants; and as they passed, one of his comrades slapped the body, and said: "Well Jack, you are best off of any of us. It won't come your turn to be hanged again, this ten year." . . . An officer shrewdly observed that the reason why General Gates was so fond of the militia was because he knew that the regular troops would lead him into fire, but there was no danger of the militia doing it.

This was after Gates had fallen into disgrace at the South and been displaced in command by General Greene. But similar contemptuous reflections upon the militia are found on several pages of the diary.

Washington sometimes notifies the chaplain that he intends to be present at the Sunday service in his brigade,— perhaps to give the chaplain opportunity to prepare a better sermon than usual. The general was an attentive listener to preaching, and appeared reverential and devout at religious services. Evidently, the chaplain thought some of the general officers were not altogether sound in the faith: —

August 29. Divine service. Present, his Excellency General Washington and suite; also, Generals Putnam, Heath, Greene, and Knox. A sermon on the truth of Christianity might not be amiss.

But I hasten to touch upon another interesting scene in Mr. Hitchcock's army experience. Portions of four years were passed either with the garrison at West Point or with the army in its immediate neighborhood, defending the passage of the Hudson. He thus marched up and down the river, and saw the attacks of the British on the forts, the capture of Stony Point by mad Anthony Wayne, and the execution of Major André. While Washington was visiting Count Rochambeau at Hartford, the army was lying in the vicinity of King's Ferry; and here we have the following entries: —

Sept. 26, 1780. This morning General Wayne marched his brigade at one o'clock. The occasion of this sudden move was the news of a British officer, said to be an adjutant-general, being taken on his way from West Point to a ship below Croton by three inhabitants, who discovered

plans of the works and the state of the garrison and other papers which detected the treasonable designs of General Arnold.

28. This evening his Excellency returned, to the great joy of the army, after an absence of twelve days, a longer period than he has been absent since he took the important command, except in winter. Mr. André, the British adjutant-general, and Mr. Smith brought down under a proper guard.

29. A band of general officers set on the trial of André. Smith's case referred to a court-martial.

30. André found guilty.

October 1. Sunday. Divine service at ten o'clock, preach from Ps. 122 : 6, 7, 8. The execution of Major André appointed at five o'clock, but a little before the time a flag arrived from General Clinton, desiring to have the execution postponed till he could send another, with some proposal for saving him. The execution deferred for the present.

October 2. At twelve o'clock this day was executed Major André. He received his fate with greater apparent fortitude than others saw it. He appeared a most genteel young fellow, handsomely dressed in his regimentals. When he came to the gallows, he said he well knew his fate, but was disappointed in the mode. He ascended the wagon cheerfully, fixed the halter round his own neck, and bound his eyes with his handkerchief. Said, smiling, "A few moments will settle the whole." Was asked if he had anything to say. Lifting up the handkerchief that covered his eyes, he said, "Gentlemen, you will bear me witness that I meet my fate like a brave man." Behold the end of human greatness, — a young fellow cut off in the midst of the brightest prospects by the hand of the common hangman!

During a furlough in 1780 Mr. Hitchcock preached for a few Sundays in Providence, R.I., for the First Congregational Society. After his return to the army he received an invitation to the pastorate, which he finally accepted. He procured a substitute, and was installed as pastor in October, 1783. Here the remainder of his life was passed in an active and fruitful ministry of twenty years. He brought to his work a fair degree of intellectual ability and culture and a large experience in practical affairs. He was instrumental in establishing a system of free public schools in the town, and heartily interested in their prosperity. He wrote and published several works of some importance upon education, agriculture, and the Lord's Supper, a catechism for the children of his parish, and a novel in two volumes, entitled "Memoirs of the Bloomsbury Family." He took

great interest in the officers and soldiers of the Revolution, and was active in settling their claims against the government. He was one of the founders of the Society of the Cincinnati, first chaplain of the Rhode Island order, and a frequent preacher at its meetings. He succeeded in having a new and elegant house of worship erected for his congregation: it was one of the most costly and beautiful church edifices in New England. Though a liberal in religion, rejecting the Westminster Confession of Faith and preaching a Christianity of good works and personal righteousness, he was chosen a trustee of Brown University, and maintained the most friendly relations with ministers of all faiths, many of whom were among his exchanges. The church enjoyed a large degree of prosperity under his ministry, and attained a leading position in the charities of the town,— an influence which it has maintained now for more than a century. Dr. Hitchcock is one of the prominent figures in Trumbull's great painting, in the rotunda of the Capitol at Washington, of the surrender of Burgoyne,— a scene of which he was an eye-witness. After a brief illness he passed away in June, 1803, at the early age of fifty-nine, sincerely mourned by his own people and the whole town. He was a many-sided man, — of great industry, of broad sympathies, of benevolent spirit, a willing worker, and a generous giver for the improvement of society and the highest interests of man.

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